

# TALKING TO THE MEDIA

1. Core messages
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## 1. Core messages

### Red Book messages

- Four years after the Programme of Action was agreed, governments have done little to keep their commitments to stop the needless suffering caused by gun violence.
- In the Middle East, North Africa and much of Asia, almost no small arms commitments have been put into action.
- Governments in East Africa, Europe, and Brazil have made a bit more progress.

#### But overall:

- Less than 40 countries have laws controlling arms brokers
- More than 100 States have failed to establish governmental bodies to coordinate national action on small arms
- Only 18 States have developed specific national strategies on small arms, and only another 14 States have got as far as discussing one.
- More than 120 States have failed to review their laws and regulations governing small arms

### Poverty and guns

- Gun violence is undermining the fight against poverty. The Millennium Development Goals to halve global poverty by 2015 will not be met unless decisive steps are taken to tackle the trade in and misuse of guns
- Conflict robs people of their livelihoods and access to education and healthcare; gun violence prevents investment and disrupts economic activity.
- 22 out of the 34 poorest countries are in or emerging from armed conflict.
- Almost 1000 people are dying from guns every day.

### Government responsibility and NGO involvement

- All States have a duty to protect their citizens from armed violence, whether committed by those known to them, a state official, a criminal or an armed group.
- States should:
  - Fulfil their commitments in the Programme of Action
  - Work towards high global standards on private ownership of guns
  - Support an international, legally-binding Arms Trade Treaty
- Governments need assistance and pressure from other sectors of society if they are to make an impact on the underlying forces that drive the supply and demand of guns. With their first-hand experience of the impact of guns and their role in tackling it, the role of NGOs is essential.

## 2. Tips for talking to journalists

### DO:

- Tell the truth
- Be as accurate as you can
- Have at least three of the main IANSA messages in your head before you start the interview. Try to get these messages in as you answer the questions. Respect journalists' time limits and deadlines: ask them when their deadline is, and make sure you give them what they have asked for before that time
- Use examples from your work/your country if you can – try to make it real for the people who will be reading or listening
- Treat reporters with respect even if they seem rude, unprepared, or ill-informed

### DON'T:

- Try to please reporters or make them happy – they are not your friends
- Mislead, exaggerate or lie. If you don't know, say so
- Use insider language, jargon, or technical phrases. Instead, imagine you are describing the problem of small arms that you work with to an acquaintance who works in a different field.
- Speak 'off the record' – there is no such thing!

### Before an interview, find out:

- The name of the reporter and their publication/station
- If it is radio or TV, whether it is pre-recorded or live, and how long the interview will be
- What the reporter is interested in discussing – you can ask them what 'angle' they are interested in
- Who else the reporter has already spoken to

If you don't feel comfortable being interviewed, say you are 'not the right person to talk to about that subject' and suggest an ally/colleague who is qualified to talk about it.

### If you're in the middle of an interview and you don't know the answer:

- Don't panic! You cannot be prepared for every single question.
- Say: "I'm not sure about that, but I do know..." and then return to one of your key messages
- If it is an interview for print, you can offer to find out the information the reporter is looking for
- Then follow through and deliver that information in time for the reporter's deadline

You can refer reporters to:

Anthea Lawson, 1 347-831-4081



### Warning:

Journalists from the gun lobby may be at the meeting. You have a right to ask a journalist which outlet they are from, and to show you their UN media pass. If you are unsure, refer them as above.

### 3. Questions and Answers

1. Gun violence and poverty
2. UN Programme of Action
3. The Arms Trade Treaty
4. Domestic gun ownership

#### Gun violence and poverty

##### How does gun proliferation contribute to poverty?

Most of the world's poorest countries are suffering from the effects of armed conflict. And according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, armed conflict is now the leading cause of hunger.

Money spent on treating gun injuries is taken away from other government budgets. Latin American countries lose 5% of their economy through gun violence.

A Kenyan IANSA member talks about the case of a 17 year old boy who was referred to a hospital in Nairobi when his jaw was shattered by a bullet. The total cost of repairing his face was \$6,000.

This could have paid for:

- A year of primary education for 100 children, OR
- Full immunisations for 250 children, OR
- 18 months of education for a medical student, OR
- Daily ugali meal for a Kenyan family of six for 10 years

#### The UN Programme of Action

##### What does IANSA want governments to do?

Governments are responsible for the safety of their own citizens, and should take action to stop the suffering caused by gun violence. Everyone knows what to do – we need tough laws to keep guns out of the hands of abusers. That applies internationally too – guns cross borders and we need strong global agreements to stop the misery caused by guns from spreading.

The most important requirement of the UN process is that governments create effective National Commissions, comprised of all the government departments that are affected by gun violence, so that they can do what is needed to stop gun violence. They should include representatives from defence, security, health and internal and foreign affairs. Most laws relating to guns are outdated and inadequate – National Commissions should update the laws and improve their enforcement.

##### What do you want to achieve at this meeting?

The Biennial Meeting of States is intended for governments to report on their progress in reducing gun violence. Because there is no formal review process, and governments are free to report whatever they want, IANSA members are playing an important role in this meeting by independently reviewing the progress made by governments.

##### How well are governments implementing the Programme of Action?

Progress has been very slow. Governments have had four years in which to show that they are taking the problem of gun violence seriously and to take steps to stop the suffering caused by guns. Very few governments are doing that.

**How many countries are implementing the Programme of Action properly?**

Only 6 of the 191 UN member States have fully reviewed their gun laws as required. No African government, no South Asian government and no South American government has taken even those basic steps to start tackling the problem of gun violence.

**According to IANSA's new report, which governments are best and which are worst at implementing the Programme of Action?****Best countries**

Four years after the Programme of Action was agreed, only 6 countries have fulfilled their obligations to review their procedures to reduce the illicit trade in guns, AND also their laws on production, import, export and transit of guns since 2001:

Finland	Hungary	Singapore
Guatemala	Latvia	Sweden.

At least 28 countries have at least reviewed their laws criminalising the illicit trade in small arms OR reviewed their laws on production, import, export and transit of guns since 2001:

Armenia	Denmark	Romania
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eritrea	Slovakia
Botswana	Fiji	Slovenia
Brazil	Georgia	South Africa
Bulgaria	Germany.	Taiwan
Burkina Faso	Ghana	Uganda
Cambodia	Lithuania	USA
Croatia	Macedonia	Uruguay
Czech Republic	New Zealand	
Canada	Poland	

It is very hard to work out which are the worst countries because governments have not provided complete information.

**The gun lobby believes that the UN trying to take our guns away from us. Is that true?**

The UN PoA is not a global gun ban. It is a coordinated attempt to close the current loopholes in arms exports laws and to stop guns falling into the hands of those who may abuse them.

The UN cannot force a government to sign up to any agreement. The UN is made up of member States and is the servant of the member governments. The UN Programme of Action is voluntary.

**The Arms Trade Treaty****How would an Arms Trade Treaty help?**

The ATT would make governments take full responsibility for the end use of their country's arms deals, even if the original buyer then sells the weapons on to a third country. In the current system, countries are involved in arms deals without caring where the arms will end up.

With a global Arms Trade Treaty, arms deals would be stopped if they were likely to contribute to human rights abuses, to fuel conflict, or to impede development. By creating a global standard, the ATT would close many of the loopholes through which arms dealers, brokers and traffickers can currently operate.

**What would the Arms Trade Treaty do that the Programme of Action cannot?**

The current UN process on reducing gun violence is NOT legally binding on governments. A global Arms Trade Treaty would be legally-binding, and would provide a minimum global standard for arms transfers based on international law. We already have legally-binding global treaties to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but there no similar treaty for guns, even though they kill over 300,000 people every year.

**If States aren't implementing the Programme of Action properly, why would they implement an Arms Trade Treaty?**

An Arms Trade Treaty would be legally binding and therefore they would be compelled to do so.

**Aren't existing embargoes and international law enough to control the arms trade?**

No. There is no binding, comprehensive international law to control and regulate the arms trade. Neither are arms embargoes enough on their own. They are usually imposed as a reaction to a crisis, and do little to prevent it.

**Don't countries have a need and a right to defend themselves – particularly given the 'war on terror'?**

International law gives countries the right to defend themselves, and to procure arms in order to do so. But it also requires governments to respect human rights, which means not transferring weapons that will be used to violate human rights.

## **Domestic gun ownership**

**Is IANSA calling for a global ban on guns? / Does IANSA think that nobody should own guns?**

Our members around the world are working to reduce gun ownership in their communities because that is what will make people safer. The situation varies from country to country; at a minimum, we believe that private gun ownership should be subject to basic standards including gun licensing and registration, with a ban on civilian ownership of military weapons.

In many countries if you want to drive a car you need a driver's license, and if you want to buy a car, the car needs to be registered with the police. When it comes to cars, most governments realise that they are lethal devices that need to be carefully regulated to save lives. At least the same standards should apply to guns.

**Why does IANSA think that private ownership of guns should be controlled?**

A gun in the home does not make anyone safer, and especially not women. Most times, when people try to use a gun in self-defence, the situation gets worse – it is not easy to use a gun when you're scared, and your attacker is more likely to use deadly force if his life is threatened. So there is actually an increased chance of being murdered if you have a gun in the home.

**Are you saying that if citizens are attacked in their homes, they should not have the right to protect themselves? /**

Most legal systems recognise the right of self-defence if people are attacked. Whether people are allowed to have guns for that purpose depends on the country where they live. However, attempting to defend yourself with a gun means that you are four times more likely to be shot yourself.

**If the police can't or won't help you, how can you defend your family if you don't have a gun?**

Reforming outdated gun laws will not solve the whole problem, but reducing the number of guns would help prevent armed crime in the first place.

**Why does regulating legally-owned guns help to control the spread of illegal guns?**

Most illegal guns start out in the legal trade. 80% of crime guns used in Mexico were originally sold legally in the US. Since the source of the illegal guns is the legal market, it is therefore essential to control the legal trade.

**If you take away legally-owned guns, then only the criminals will have guns. How is that going to improve safety?**

In countries where the gun laws have been reformed, gun crime has gone down and lives have been saved. In Canada the gun murder rate dropped 20% and in Australia, the gun murder rate dropped 45%.

The lives of women in particular have been saved by the Canadian law, where wives and ex-wives are consulted before a man buys a gun. Keeping guns out of the hands of abusers has caused the gun murder rate for women to drop 40%.

**Hasn't the fight for gun control already been lost in America?**

The fight for better controls on civilian ownership of guns is gathering momentum. The developing world has recognised that unregulated gun ownership is causing massive suffering and damaging the economy. Brazil has one of the highest rates of gun murder in the world. In October this year, Brazilians will vote in their first-ever national referendum on banning the sale of guns to civilians.

**The gun lobby says that Australia/Canada/England banned guns and now only criminals have guns – crime rates have soared. Why would other countries follow?**

These are figures produced by the gun lobby. Why would we rely on the gun lobby for unbiased research on gun violence? The truth is that if you regulate guns, you reduce the number of people shot dead every year, including suicides and accidents as well as gun homicides.

Neither Canada nor Australia has actually banned guns. In Canada since the gun laws were tightened, the gun murder rate has dropped 20% since the guns laws were reformed; in Australia, the gun murder rate dropped 45%.

**Don't hunters have the right to own guns?**

If a country allows gun ownership for hunting, it should be restricted to guns suitable for hunting. Shooting animals does not require a handgun or a military-style assault weapon.

Hunters should not be exempt from being properly licensed and having their rifle registered. Anybody can claim to be a hunter – they should need to provide evidence before being given a gun.